



An excerpt from CITY OF ASHES by Cassandra Clare
Book Two in *The Mortal Instruments* series

The first time Clary had ever seen the Institute, it had looked like a dilapidated church, its roof broken in, stained yellow police tape holding the door closed. Now she didn't have to concentrate to dispel the illusion. Even from across the street she could see it exactly as it was, a towering Gothic cathedral whose spires seemed to pierce the dark blue sky like knives.

Luke fell silent. It was clear from the look on his face that some kind of silent struggle was taking place inside him. As they mounted the steps, Jace reached inside his shirt as if from habit, but when he drew his hand out, it was empty. He laughed without any mirth. "I forgot. Maryse took my keys from me before I left."

"Of course she did." Luke was standing directly in front of the Institute's doors. He gently touched the symbols carved into the wood, just below the architrave. "These doors are just like the ones at the Council Hall in Idris. I never thought I would see their like again."

Clary almost felt guilty interrupting Luke's reverie, but there were practical matters to attend to. "If we don't have a key—"

"One shouldn't be necessary. An Institute should be open to any of the Nephilim who mean no harm to the inhabitants."

"What if they mean harm to us?" Jace muttered.

Luke's mouth quirked at the corner. "I don't think that makes a difference."

"Yeah, the Clave always stacks the deck its way." Jace's voice sounded muffled—his lower lip was swelling, his left eyelid turning purple.

Why didn't he heal himself? Clary wondered. "Did she take your stele, too?"

"I didn't take anything when I left," Jace said. "I didn't want to take anything the Lightwoods got for me."

Luke looked at him with some concern. "Every Shadowhunter must have a stele."

"So I'll get another one," said Jace, and put his hand to the Institute's door. "In the name of the Clave," he said, "I ask entry to this holy place. And in the name of the Angel Raziel, I ask your blessings upon my mission against—"

The doors swung open. Clary could see the cathedral's interior through them, the shadowy darkness illuminated here and there by candles in tall iron candelabras.

"Well, that's convenient," said Jace. "I guess blessings are easier to come by than I thought. Maybe I should ask for blessings on my mission against all those who wear white after Labor Day."

"The Angel knows what your mission is," said Luke. "You don't have to say the words aloud, Jonathan."

For a moment Clary thought she saw something flicker across Jace's face—uncertainty, surprise—and maybe even relief? But all he said was, "Don't call me that. It's not my name."

They made their way through the ground floor of the cathedral, past the empty pews and the light burning forever on the altar. Luke looked around him curiously, and even seemed surprised when the elevator, like a gilded birdcage, arrived to carry them up. "This must have been Maryse's idea," he said as they stepped into it. "It's entirely her taste."

"It's been here as long as I have," said Jace, as the door clanged shut behind them. The ride up was brief, and none of them spoke. Clary played nervously with the fringe of her scarf. She felt a little guilty about having told Simon to go home and wait for her to call him later. She had seen from the annoyed set of his shoulders as he stalked off down Canal Street that he'd felt summarily dismissed. Still, she couldn't imagine having him—a

mundane—here while Luke petitioned Maryse Lightwood on Jace's behalf; it would just make everything awkward.

The elevator came to a clanging stop and they stepped out to find Church waiting for them in the entryway, a slightly dilapidated red bow around his neck. Jace bent to rub the back of his hand along the cat's head. "Where's Maryse?"

Church made a noise in his throat, halfway between a purr and a growl, and headed off down the corridor. They followed, Jace silent, Luke glancing around with evident curiosity. "I never thought I'd see the inside of this place."

Clary asked, "Does it look like you thought it would?"

"I've been to the Institutes in London and Paris; this is not unlike those, no. Though somehow—"

"Somehow what?" Jace was several strides ahead.

"Colder," said Luke.

Jace said nothing. They had reached the library. Church sat down as if to indicate that he planned to go no farther. Voices were faintly audible through the thick wooden door, but Jace pushed it open without knocking and strode inside.

Clary heard a voice exclaim in surprise. For a moment her heart contracted as she thought of Hodge, who had all but lived in this room. Hodge, with his gravelly voice, and Hugin, the raven who was his almost constant companion—and who had, at Hodge's orders, nearly ripped out her eyes.

It wasn't Hodge, of course. Behind the enormous mahogany plank desk that balanced on the backs of two kneeling stone angels sat a middle-aged woman with Isabelle's ink black hair and Alec's thin, wiry build. She wore a neat black suit, very plain, in contrast to the multiple brightly colored rings that burned on her fingers.

Beside her stood another figure: a slender teenage boy, slightly built, with curling dark hair and honey-colored skin. As he turned to look at them, Clary couldn't hold back an exclamation of surprise. "Raphael?"

For a moment the boy looked taken aback. Then he smiled, his teeth very white and sharp—not surprising, considering that he was a vampire.

"Dios," he said, addressing himself to Jace. "What happened to you, brother? You look as if a pack of wolves tried to tear you apart."

"That's either a shockingly good guess," said Jace, "or you heard about what happened."

Raphael's smile turned into a grin. "I hear things."

The woman behind the desk rose to her feet. "Jace," she said, her voice full of anxiety. "Did something happen? Why are you back so soon? I thought you were going to stay with—" Her gaze moved past him to Luke and Clary. "And who are you?"

"Jace's sister," Clary said.

Maryse's eyes rested on Clary. "Yes, I can see it. You look like Valentine." She turned back to Jace. "You brought your sister with you? And a mundane, as well? It's not safe for any of you here right now. And especially a mundane—"

Luke, smiling faintly, said, "But I'm not a mundane."

Maryse's expression changed slowly from bewilderment to shock as she looked at Luke—really looked at him—for the first time. "Lucian?"

"Hello, Maryse," said Luke. "It's been a long time."